

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified Application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 4-7, 21-23, 29-34, 36-39 and 45-51 are pending in the Application, claims 45-51 having been added herein. Claims 24-28 and 40-44 have been withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention, and have been canceled herein to avoid unnecessary claim fees.

Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 4-7, 22, 23, 29, 30, 38/29, 38/30, 39/29 and 39/30 have been allowed. Applicant also notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 38/21, 38/32, 39/21 and 39/32 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of their base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant also notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 31, 33, 38/31, 38/33, 39/31 and 39/33 would be allowable upon correction of the informalities. Since Applicant has amended the claims to correct the noted informalities, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are now in condition for allowance.

The Examiner objected to claims 31-34 and 39 for certain informalities. Applicant has amended the claims to correct all of the specified informalities.

The Examiner rejected claims 21, 32, 34 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nishio (JP5-323196). Applicant amended claims 21, 32 and 34 to clarify that the fourth lens groups moves upon zooming from a wide angle end to a telephoto end of the zoom lens system. In contrast, as one can see from Figure 1 of Nishio, the zoom lens system of Nishio has a fourth lens group that remains fixed during zooming. Nishio neither teaches nor suggests a zoom lens system as recited in claims 21, 32 and 34, as amended.

Applicant amended claim 36 to clarify that the zoom lens system has a first lens group that moves constantly towards an image side while zooming from a wide angle end to a telephoto end of the zoom lens system. The zoom lens system according to Nishio has a first lens group that remains fixed during zooming from a wide angle end to a telephoto end of the zoom lens system, as one can see from Figure 1 of Nishio. Therefore, Applicant respectfully

submits that claims 21, 32, 34 and 36 are now in condition for allowance and requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected claim 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Nakayama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,285,509). Applicant amended claim 36 to clarify that the first lens group moves constantly towards an image side while zooming from a wide angle end to a telephoto end of the zoom lens system. In contrast, the zoom lens system of Figure 4 of Nakayama et al. (see column 6, lines 29-32) has a first lens group that moves in a non-uniform path, first in one direction and then in the other direction. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 36 is now in condition for allowance and requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) be withdrawn.

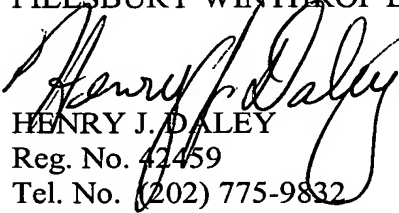
The Examiner rejected claim 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishio in view of Kohno et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,118,592). Claim 37 depends from claim 36 and is thus distinguishable from Nishio for at least the reasons noted above in regard to claim 36. The Kohno et al. reference does not make up for the deficiencies of the Nishio reference. Kohno et al. does not disclose any lens system at all in which the first lens group moves towards the image side upon zooming from the wide angle and to the telephoto end. Therefore, no combination of Kohno et al. with Nishio will result in the lens system as now recited in base claim 36. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 37 is in condition for allowance and requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Applicant added new claims 45-51 to claim additional aspects of the original disclosure. New claims 46 and 51 contain some features similar to claim 21 and new claims 48 and 50 contain some features similar to claim 36. Applicant respectfully submits that all new claims 45-51 are also in condition for allowance.

Applicant has addressed all of the Examiner's objections and rejections and respectfully submits that the Application is now in condition for allowance.

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Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,
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